

Floorball

What Are The Educational Applications?

Games are an important component in both physical education and youth recreation programs. Knowing which games to integrate into your program can be an overwhelming task. In David Belka's book, *Teaching Children Games*, several reference points are provided to help you evaluate the appropriateness of various games. According to Belka's criteria, an appropriate game to include in an activity program would:

- Provide for maximum participation, giving all children many, high-quality turns.
- Provide for safe play.
- Support a developmental principle.
- Encourage efficient and effective movement.
- Use skills, concepts, and strategies to help children become better games players.

The game of Floorball provides teachers and program leaders with a new game that addresses many of Belka's points. At first glance, you may think Floorball is just another hockey game. However, Floorball is a unique game that is easy to learn, fast, and fun.

How Can I Use This Product With My Kids?

Official Floorball rules for competitive play are provided at the end of this document. This Activity Guide is intended to help you introduce the game in a developmentally appropriate fashion while providing playing conditions that approximate the real game.

LEVEL I—GETTING STARTED

Level I activities present basic concepts, skills, and rules necessary for safe play with children. In Level I, no goals are utilized and no score needs to be recorded. The object at this level is to get the children passing, receiving, and moving with the ball from one side of the court to the other side of the court.

Concepts

Sticks Down—Raising the stick over the waist level (knee level for younger players) on the fore- or back swing is forbidden in the game of Floorball. In Level I play; children are required to keep the stick blade on/close to the floor. The close-to-the-floor concept reinforces sticks down and helps the student keep the stick and blade in position to receive a teammate's pass or make a low shot on the goal.

Face Off—Floorball play begins with a face off at the center of the court. An interesting point about the face off is that the ball will be hit backward to a teammate, not forward. In Level I, two opposing team players stand on opposite sides of the center circle of the court. On an auditory signal (whistle or verbal cue), face-off players each attempt to pass the ball backward to a teammate.

Two Sticks Only—In Level I, this means only one player per team on the ball. In the game of Floorball, you may not make contact with an opponent or an opponent's stick. By allowing only one player per team on the ball, you prevent unnecessary opponent or opponent stick contact. This concept also prevents children from bunching up on the ball and competing for ball control with their teammates.

Skills

Passing—Children should look for an open teammate (one not surrounded by opposing team members). Face the direction he/she is passing and strike the ball through its center.

Receiving—Children should move to an open space (away from opposing team members) and call to the passer. Receiver should then get in line with the ball and absorb the force of the ball as it makes contact with the blade.

Rules

In Level I; call all penalties that affect safety!

- High sticking
- Checking
- Slashing with the stick against the body or the stick of the opponent player
- Holding, pushing with the hands, and running backwards into the opponent

Assess penalties with a free hit from the location of the penalty or remove the offending player from game play for a short time out.

In Level I play, team size can vary from three-on-three to five-on-five. It is recommended to start with a three-on-three strategy as this allows children to have more contact (practice time) with the ball. Three new players from each team will be rotated into the game at one-to two-minute intervals. The other children may play along the sidelines. Sideline players have the responsibility of returning the ball into play when it goes out of bounds along the side. Sideline players are required to use their feet to trap the ball and then send the ball back into play with a pass from the foot.

If you have confidence that the children will adhere to the concepts, skills, and rules of Level I game play, you may have more than one game going at a time. In Floorball, the area of play can vary in size, but the general rule of thumb is that the length should be two times the width. A full-size basketball court works well for a five-on-five game, while a half court is appropriate for a three-on-three game.

If the ball is too lively (fast and bouncy) for the group of Level I children with whom you are working, stuff an onion net/plastic wrapper from a bread bag inside the ball. This will slow the ball down and reduce the amount of bounce.

LEVEL II—LET'S PLAY SOME MORE

In Level II, children are introduced to dribbling and attacking the goal. At this level, the official Floorball goals are used and goals scored may be recorded. Position the goal so that there is ample room to play around and behind it. At least 3'-4' from the wall and centered on the court. Although goals are introduced, there are no goalies used in Level II play. Attacking a goal without a goalie may seem easy, however, the small size of the goal makes scoring very challenging with or without a goalie. All the concepts, skills, and rules presented in Level I are employed in addition to new concepts, skills, and rules for Level II.

Concepts

Goal Crease—There is a zone in which players may not enter to shoot a goal. Determine the size of the crease based on the abilities of the players with whom you are working. Even though goalies are not used in Level II play, you need to introduce the concept of the goalie crease. This area is utilized to prevent bunching up around the goal.

Skills

Dribbling—Children need to learn how to dribble using both sides of the stick blade in order to keep the ball in close proximity.

Attacking the Goal—Children should learn to shoot on sight and keep the shot low. Create a combination skill by having the children receive a pass and turn to attack the goal in one move.

Rules

Level II play allows playing the ball off the walls behind the goal. Use either the three-on-three or five-on-five playing strategy in Level II.

Children may now pass the ball or dribble the ball to move it down the playing field. Children may make an attack on the goal when in range.

An A-Mazing Drill (this is a great drill for putting together the concepts, skills, and rules from Levels I & II)—Randomly place (scatter) cones on one-half the playing area. Using many cones of differing sizes creates a more challenging environment. Children must dribble the ball through the cones without their stick or body touching a cone (the ball may touch the cone). If a cone is touched by the stick or the player's body, he/she must return to the start line.

If the player makes it through the cone maze without a touch, he/she continues to dribble the ball to the goal area and may make a shot on goal. A good goal results in a point scored for that player. After one shot on goal, players return to start line. Another variation would have successful maze dribblers passing the ball to a teammate (waiting on the other side of the maze) who receives the ball and then makes a shot on goal.

How Do I Make This Product Developmentally Appropriate For My Kids?

The ideas and activities presented in Level I and II provide a foundation for developmentally appropriate play for children. In addition, the equipment utilized in the game of Floorball has been modified to enhance play and foster success for children. Floorball sticks are lightweight and have a larger blade than traditional floor/field hockey sticks. This modification provides children with a larger receiving and striking area. Rather than use an irregular-shaped hockey puck, Floorball uses a round ball which is easier to track and provides a slightly larger target than a traditional floor hockey puck.

How Does This Product Relate To Current Educational Thinking?

The Council on Physical Education for Children (COPEC) developed the position statement "Developmentally Appropriate Physical Education Practices for Children". Twenty-six components of a physical education program have been identified, and developmentally appropriate and inappropriate examples are provided as guidelines for recognizing best practices (appropriate) and counter productive practices (inappropriate). These guidelines are useful as a decision-making tool for developing quality physical education programs. When working with Floorball, the following document guidelines are helpful.

Development of Movement Concepts and Motor Skills—Appropriate Practices

- Children are provided with frequent and meaningful age-appropriate practice opportunities that enable individuals to develop a functional understanding of movement concepts (body awareness, space awareness, effort, and relationships) and build competence and confidence in their ability to perform a variety of motor skills (locomotor, nonlocomotor, and manipulative).

Active Participation—Appropriate Practices

- All children are involved in activities that allow them to remain continuously active.
- Classes are designed to meet a child's need for active participation in all learning experiences.

Games—Appropriate Practices

- Games are selected, designed, sequenced, and modified by teachers and/or children to maximize the learning and enjoyment of children.

Rules Governing Game Play—Appropriate Practices

- Teachers and/or children modify official rules, regulations, equipment and playing space of adult sports to match the varying abilities of the children.

Number of Children on a Team—Appropriate Practices

- Children participate in team games (e.g. 2-3 per team), that allow for numerous practice opportunities while also allowing them to learn about the various aspects of the game being taught.

Equipment—Appropriate Practices

- Enough equipment is available so that each child benefits from maximum participation. For example, every child in a class would have a ball.

- Equipment is matched to the size, confidence, and skill level of the children so that they are motivated to actively participate in physical education classes.

Rules & Play

The play of floorball is not that much different from hockey. The major difference is that the rules of floorball do not allow for any high sticking, stick contact, or body contact, so the game tends to be less physical in that sense. From an exertion point of view, it is no less physical than hockey, but perhaps even more so!

It is a safer game. Floorball is played using a stick with a curved and concave plastic blade. The shaft is shorter than a traditional hockey stick and round, which makes it very maneuverable. This design allows for a shot that is more of a whipping or flicking type of motion as opposed to a slap shot. To realize the benefits of safer play, it is important to first teach the proper shot.

The stick is not permitted to be above the waist (knee for youth) on the back- or fore-stroke when taking a shot. There is no puck or heavy ball, instead, a lightweight plastic ball similar to a whiffle ball is used. It is the combination of these that makes the game so much fun. The ball is extremely fast and can be easily lifted, bounced, and deflected. At the youth and beginner level, there is no goalie. The goal is small: 23.75"H x 35.5" W.

Rules—A short list of what you may not do:

- Pass the ball to another player using your foot or receive such a pass.
- Use head, hands, or arms to stop the ball.
- Use your foot or stick to play the ball above knee level. You may play the ball in the air with your stick or foot up to the height of your knee.
- Make contact with an opponent or an opponent's stick.
- Be inside the goal area.

Rules—Things that you may do:

- Kick the ball to your own stick. You may dribble this way as long as the ball comes into contact with your stick, or an opposing player's stick, before you kick it again. (You may not kick it two times in a row).
- You may stop the ball with your body, but not with your head, arms or hands. You may not jump up to stop the ball.
- Play the ball in the air up to knee level.
- Have your stick in the goal area.

Penalties

For beginners, keep the rules simple. Call penalties that affect safety such as high sticking and checking. Assess penalties with a free hit from the location of the penalty.

Play

Teams can vary in size from three-on-three to five-on-five. Be sure to have some subs on hand; you will need them! The area of play can vary in size, but the general rule of thumb is that the length should be two times the width. A full-size basketball court would do fine for a five-on-five game. Use a half court for three-on-three. Playing the ball off the walls adds an interesting dimension to the game!

Play begins with a face off at the center of the court. All players must be at least three meters (9.8 feet) from the ball.

Time of Play

The official rule is three 20-minute periods with two 10-minute intermissions. When using the small goal, play without a goalie. Maintain a crease around the goal that seems reasonable to you. For safety, no offensive players are permitted inside this zone. Place the goal on the end line of the basketball court, about three feet from the wall.

Interruption of Play

Play the ball off the walls and behind the goal. If the ball goes out of play, the non-offending team gets a hit from that location. If there is no clearly offending team, resume play with a face off.

Resources

The most readily available resources are on the Internet. Search terms that may be used are: floorball, innebandy, bandy, salibandy, or unihoc.

Some links to start out with:

The International Floorball Federation

<http://www.floorball.org>

Official rules, floorball news, and lots of links.

Floorball in America

<http://www.usfloorball.net>

About Floorball and who is playing in the United States.

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